

Performance Measurement ...Matters

http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gov/dmb/perf_measure.htm

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1, Summer 2004

A DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET PUBLICATION

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FAIRFAX COUNTY RECOGNIZED WITH PERFORMANCE AWARD

On April 28, 2004, the Performance Institute, a private, nonpartisan think tank dedicated to improving government through the principles of performance, competition, transparency and accountability recognized Fairfax County, along with Miami-Dade County, Florida with its annual **City and County Performance Management Award**. The Performance Management Award recognizes outstanding contributions in performance-based management in five core functional areas: strategic planning, budgeting, human resources management, information technology, and procurement and contracting.

Nominees must establish that their local governments have shown measurable success in these areas, aligning each function with city/countywide goals. To be considered, a jurisdiction must have incorporated jurisdiction-wide outcome measures into a comprehensive performance-based system. Fairfax County's recent efforts to establish strategic linkages in the annual budget between the County's core purpose and vision elements, was the basis for earning this award. The effort included linking resources with services and particularly countywide and agency-specific measures that demonstrate progress on achieving the County's vision.

Earning this award is a tribute to the many County staff who have worked diligently to develop strategic plans linked to the County core purpose and vision elements, as well as specific performance measures in order to demonstrate accountability.

COUNTY HOSTS REGIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT CONSORTIUM

For the seventh year, Fairfax County hosted the Regional Performance Measurement Consortium. This is a group of staff from local governments in the Washington metropolitan area who meet annually to discuss developments in the field of performance measurement and share best practices.

At the May 20th meeting, members discussed their individual localities' approaches to performance measurement.

John Greiner, the Performance Measurement Coordinator for Montgomery County shared that jurisdiction's annual performance report. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) was represented by Carrie Fassett who discussed ICMA's role in coordinating the Center for Performance Measurement, a program to benchmark performance among local governments. Lastly, Barbara Emerson discussed Fairfax County's recent budget redesign with improved linkages between strategic planning, resources and results. In addition to the formal presentations, attendees have the opportunity to meet their peers and develop relationships for future information-sharing. The latter has been invaluable as each of the jurisdictions is in a different stage of performance measurement; some are quite advanced, while others are just starting out.



The Regional Consortium had its cake and ate it too. Anne Fu (DPWES) made the above cake with the meeting agenda on it.

COUNTY EXEC ADDRESSES ICMA CONFERENCE

The location was Annapolis, Maryland; however, it seemed like Fairfax County North. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) opened its annual Center for Performance Measurement conference with a keynote address from former County Executive, Robert J. O'Neill, Jr. His address focused largely on the importance of performance measurement in local government today and contained many positive references to Fairfax County's program. Among his comments, he noted, "If performance matters, management counts," and he proceeded to exhort those in attendance to continue their efforts to measure and improve performance. As the next speaker on the agenda, County Executive Tony Griffin provided the perspective of a county that has been measuring performance and continually enhancing its efforts. He provided real-life examples to which the audience could relate. Consequently, many of those in attendance remarked about the usefulness of his presentation, which would help them in their own efforts.

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

- Winston Churchill

PM BROWNBAG

Just in time for agency FY 2006 budget submissions, the PM Team will be hosting a brownbag lunch on **August 5 from noon to 1 p.m. in Conference Rooms 4-5 of the Government Center.** The topic of this session is a refresher on the **basic performance measurement methodology** including terminology and use of the PM database to enter performance data and run reports. If it's been a while since you've done this and you didn't have the opportunity to attend the full class on June 16th, consider bringing your lunch and sitting in on this refresher.

FALL MEETINGS

For the past few years, the County Executive has been conducting a series of performance measurement (PM) meetings with agency directors each fall. This year's meetings will combine a discussion of agency strategic plans and performance measures. The meetings represent a tremendous opportunity to determine if agencies are focusing on countywide vision elements, as well as gauge their performance on those strategic priorities. To begin with, summary data, including the percentage of targets that an agency met over the past few years, as well as the average pay for performance awards for that agency are compiled. This is just a starting point. Agency directors and their staffs take a good look at what's happening in their organizations and come to the meeting prepared to discuss these trends with the County Executive, Deputy County Executives, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Information Officer, Budget Director and the appropriate budget analyst. To get the most out of these meetings, agencies should:

- Ensure that FY 2004 actual data are entered into the PM Database soon after the end of the fiscal year, but definitely by the time their FY 2006 budget request is submitted in September. An absence of actual data can appear as if no progress is being made on the agency's goals and objectives.

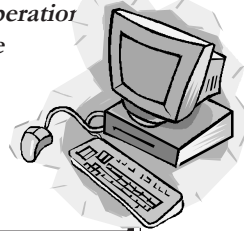
- Go beyond simply reporting the data – run the various reports that are available to agencies and scrutinize the data. Do they appear to be accurate and complete? If agencies have questions about any of the database analyses, contact Barbara Emerson in the Department of Management and Budget.
- Use those reports to analyze what's going on with your agency's performance. Are you meeting or exceeding targets or are there factors that are keeping you from meeting them? If your performance isn't what you'd expect it to be, what is your plan to address that?

The most productive meetings are not necessarily those with the agencies that are easily meeting their performance targets but those in which constructive dialogue occurs to initiate actions to improve.

Sometimes it is necessary to get others involved who can help an agency achieve its objectives. These meetings provide just such an opportunity as well as a forum for understanding what's happening and why, in addition to what we can do to continue to improve.

"The first rule of any technology used in a business is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify the efficiency. The second is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify the inefficiency."

- Bill Gates



Performance Measurement Matters is published quarterly by the PM Team. Editor: Barbara Emerson; Technical Support: Lynda Pham, Department of Management and Budget.

PM TEAM

The Performance Measurement (PM) Team consists of 14 members from 10 different agencies who provide input on the direction of the County's PM efforts. Each April, this newsletter publicizes the opportunity for agencies to nominate new members to the team. A minimum one-year commitment is required; however, most of the current members have participated for several years. The following is a current listing of the team. Feel free to contact any member if you have questions or comments about the County's PM efforts.

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